

G.
I.
J
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E

ARE **YOU** A PEN PAL? see pages 8-13!

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G.I. Joe

10¢

FEBRUARY NO. 49



"MILK BOTTLE SOLDIERS" Private Sparks' Private War



WEB COMIC
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Khaki Humor

VIC MARTIN



"WATCH OUT FOR HIS LEFT!"

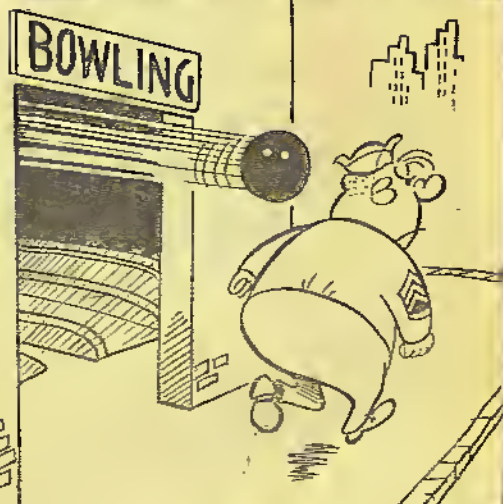


"SIS WILL BE DOWN AS SOON AS SHE THINKS SHE'S MADE YOU WAIT LONG ENOUGH!"



MESS HALL

"NOW COMES THE PART OF THE ARMY I HATE!"



BOWLING

BOOM!



"HE'S PRETTY GOOD, EXCEPT FOR HIS HABIT OF SAYING 'BOOM!'"

G.I. Joe in Someone's in the Kitchen with Diner



DOUGHERTY'S THE NAME, FRIEND-- 'FIVE-SPOT' DOUGHERTY TO YOU! PUT 'ER THERE! I COULDN'T HELP OVERHEARIN' WHAT YOU WAS SAYIN' TO 'LITTLE FELLER... AN' WHEN FIVE-SPOT DOUGHERTY SPOTS A **SMART** MAN, FIVE-SPOT DOUGHERTY AIN'T NEVER WRONG! NOW, JUST **HOW** INTERESTED ARE YA IN GETTIN' INTO BUSINESS-- AN' WHAT'S YER NAME?



REILLY--READY-MONEY REILLY. AN' THIS HERE IS--

READY-MONEY REILLY! I LIKE IT, FRIEND! SOUNDS REAL SUBSTANTIAL! NOW, IF YER LOOKIN' FER A REAL RED-HOT GOIN' ENTERPRISE, IT JUST SO HAPPENS I GOT HERE WITH ME THE FULL DEED AN' TITLE TO THE MOST...



AND NOT MUCH LATER...

READY-MONEY, WHAT DOES IT SAY WE BOUGHT?



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EARLY THE FOLLOWING DAY...

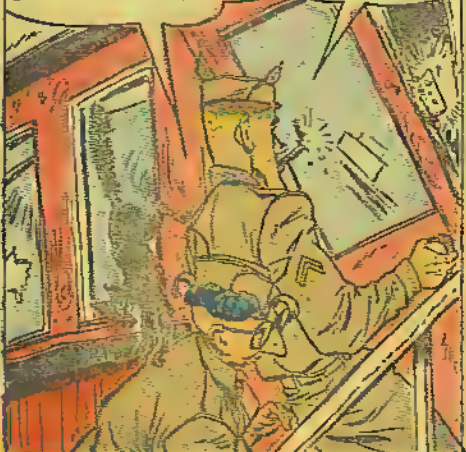


GOSH, READY-MONEY--
DO YOU SUPPOSE MR.
DOUGHERTY WAS **RIGHT**?
YOU SAID HE CALLED OUR
NEW DINER A **GOING ENTER-
PRISE**--BUT IT LOOKS KIND
OF ALREADY
GONE TO ME!

HEH-HEH--Y'CAN'T
JUDGE NOTHIN'
FROM FIRST
IMPRESSIONS,
UGLY!--C'MON--
LET'S HAVE A
LOOK INSIDE!

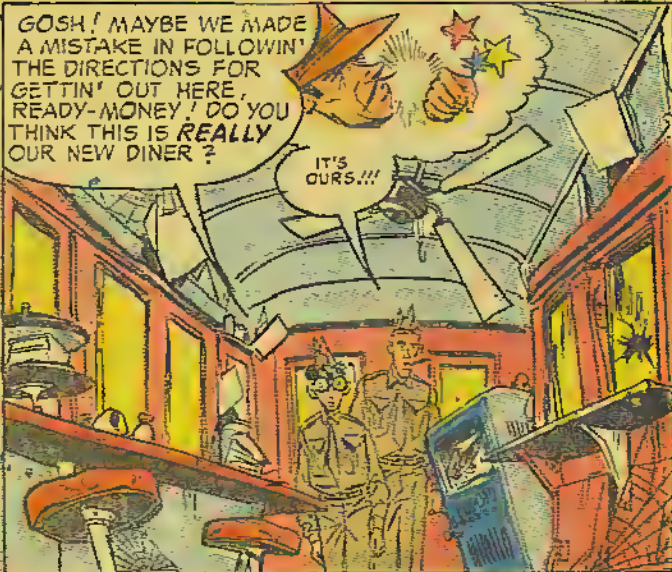
MESS SERGEANT CACCIOTORE HERE
SAYS HE'LL GIVE US HIS
RECIPE FOR CATFISH-
BURGERS TO HELP US
GET STARTED! --

WE GO!
I'LL JUST--
COPS!



GOSH! MAYBE WE MADE
A MISTAKE IN FOLLOWIN'
THE DIRECTIONS FOR
GETTIN' OUT HERE,
READY-MONEY! DO YOU
THINK THIS IS **REALLY**
OUR NEW DINER?

IT'S
OURS!!!



OH, IT'S **YOU**, MERLIN--
UGLY AN' ME JUST
BOUGHT THIS PLACE!
HEH--HEH! WE'RE
THE NEW OWNERS!

WELL, IF IT HAIN'T MY FRIEND
READY-MONEY REILLY! I
THOUGHT I HEARD NOISES
WHILE I WAS PASSIN'! DID
Y' SAY YOU BOUGHT IT? YOU
MEAN YOU PAID LIVE CASH MONEY
FOR IT? WHY, OL' AUNTIE BLUEBLOSSOM,
WHAT USED TO OWN IT GIVE IT AWAY TO
SOME TRAVELLIN' FELLER! SHE WAS
GLAD TO BE SHED OF IT!



---FOLKS WEREN'T
NEVER COMIN' WAY
OUT **HERE** FER
THEIR EATS WHEN
THEY CAN
MAKE BETTER
AT HOME!

I JUST BROKE
A FINGERNAIL
ON THIS CAKE.
READY-MONEY
--BUT I GOT
A **WONDERFUL**
IDEA OUT OF IT!
EVERYTHIN' HERE MUST
BE REAL OLD SO WHY
DON'T WE---



LATER THE SAME DAY, AT MERLIN MULLINS' GENERAL STORE...

I RECKON I'D FERGIT ABOUT TURNIN' IT INTO A FILLIN' STATION, READY-MONEY! WE GOT A RIGHT NICE PUMP HERE IN TOWN! BESIDES, NOTHIN' MUCH GOES PAST THE BLUEBLOSSOM DINER, 'CEPTIN' MULES - AN' WITH MULES, WHAT'S TO FILL?

MY FINGER- NAIL STILL HURTS FROM FROM THE CAKE, READY-MONEY.. BUT MY IDEAS AWFUL GOOD! THAT CAKE WAS SO OLD--

WILL YOU **KNOCK OFF** TELLIN' ME ABOUT YER FINGERNAIL? CAN'T YOU UNDERSTAND MERLIN AN' ME'S GOT **HEAVY THINKIN'** TO DO? SAY, WHAT'S THIS?

OH, THAT'S A MENOO COVER I PICKED UP THE TIME I WAS TO MEMPHIS FER OVERNIGHT!

WENT TO A RIGHT SLICKETY EATIN' PLACE, THAT THERE GIRL WAS A SINGIN' AN' A DANCIN' LIKE SHE WAS ON A HOT SKILLET! AN' THEY HAD A LIVIN' ORCHESTRA, AN' FOLKS WAS GETTIN' UP RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THEIR EATIN' TO DANCE, AN'---

THAT'S IT!! THAT'S WHAT'S GONNA DO IT FER US!!! THE ONE SURE THING THIS TOWN AIN'T GOT!!



WHAT? HER?

A **NIGHT CLUB**, STUPID! A GEN-U-WINE LIVING-IT-UP-TYPE **NIGHT CLUB!!!** MERLIN, WE'LL TURN THAT BLOTCH-HEAP OF A DINER INTO A REAL SNAZZY GATHERING PLACE FER AFTER DARK!



I AIN'T EXACTLY SURE YOU'RE A-MAKIN' THE RIGHT DECISION, READY-MONEY! FOLKS 'ROUND HERE AIN'T MUCH FER STAYIN' UP PAST THE CHICKENS!

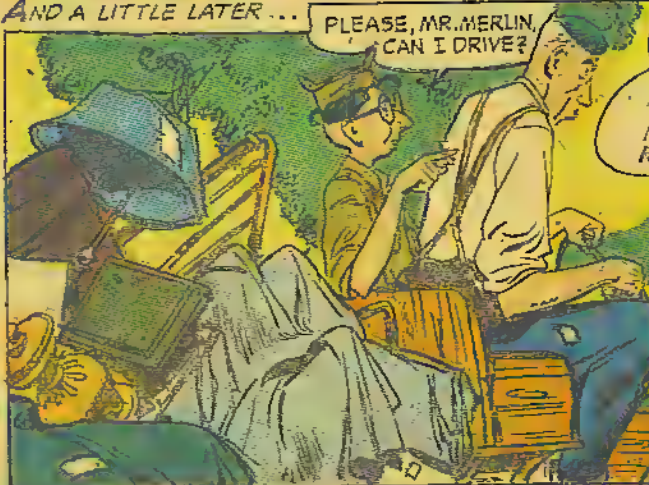
BECAUSE THEY AIN'T NEVER **HAD** NOTHIN' TO MAKE 'EM **WANT** TO STAY UP! NOW, LET'S GO OUTSIDE FER A LOOK-AT WHAT YA GOT AVAILABLE FER THE DECORATIONS!!!



AND A LITTLE LATER...

PLEASE, MR. MERLIN, CAN I DRIVE?

OKAY, MERLIN--YOU AN' UGLY GET THE STUFF ON OUT TO THE DINER, WHILE I GET STARTED WRITIN' UP SOME 'ADVERTISING CIRCULARS! AN' BE CARE-FUL YA DON'T **BREAK** NOTHIN'! RE-MEMBER, **READY-MONEY REILLY'S ROOST!** IS GONNA BE STRICTLY **HIGH-CLASS!**



A FEW WEEKS LATER...

I WISH MY FINGERNAIL
DIDN'T STILL HURT!

REILLY'S ROOST

ALL NITE CABARET
EXCLUSIVE
COME IN!!



BLAST IT YA
BEEN LISTENIN'
TO THAT SAME
RECORD FOR
TWO WEEKS,
MERLIN! DON'TCHA
KNOW THEM WORDS
YET?

AIN'T NOTHIN' ELSE
FER PASSIN' THE
TIME, READY-MONEY!
WE DONE WORE
OUT THE PLAYIN'
CARDS!



A LITTLE WHILE LATER...

PSST!!! READY-
MONEY! MR. MULLINS!
I THINK SOMEBODY'S
COMIN'!! I HEAR
WHEELS!

MAN THE
KITCHEN,
MERLIN! GET
EVERYTHIN'
COOKIN' AGAIN!

NO TELLIN' WHAT
OUR FIRST CUSTOMER'S
GONNA WANT!... GET BACK
OUTSIDE, UGLY--AN' DON'T
FORGET WHAT I TOLD
YA TO SAY!

WELCOME
TO READY-
MONEY.
REILLY'S
ROOST,
FOLKS! GO
RIGHT IN!
THERE'S NO
WAITIN' FER
SEATS!

YOU RECKON THE
LIL' FELLER'S
DROPPED SOME-
THIN' PAW? MEBBE
YOU CAN HELP 'IM
FIND IT!



ABOUT A HALF-HOUR LATER...

--NOPE-- NOTHIN' ON
HERE SOUNDS LIKE
AUNTIE BLUEBLOSSOM'S
COOKIN', DO IT, MAW?

NO, IT DON'T,
PAW. BEST BE
PAYIN' THE MAN
FER THE WATER
AN' WE'LL BE GET-
TIN' ON HOME...

DON'T RECKON HE'LL BE
CHARGIN' US FER THE DRINKIN'
WATER, MAW! FOLKS 'ROUND
HERE IS NEIGHBORS! C'MON,
THE MULE GITS RIGHT
SKITTISH EFFEN SHE'S
UP TOO LATE...



A FEW DAYS LATER...

HEY, MERLIN-- I'VE GOT IT **LICKED!** IT COME TO ME LAST NIGHT! I GOT IT ALL FIGURED OUT WHAT TO DO WITH ME NON-PAYING NIGHT CLUB! I'M GONNA--

I AIN'T ONE FER GOIN' BACK ON A FRIEND, READY-MONEY, BUT I'M RIGHT TUCKERED OUT FROM STAYIN' UP ALL THESE NIGHTS FER NO BUSINESS!

I BEEN THINKIN' I'M A GOIN' TO HAFTA WITHDRAW FROM HELPIN' OUT. I JEST CAINT...

I BEEN **THINKIN', TOO!** YOU WAS RIGHT ABOUT FOLKS NOT STAYIN' UP LATE AROUND HERE, SO I'M TAKIN' ME NIGHT CLUB AN' TURNIN' IT INTO A... HERE **LOOK!!!**



WOMEN OF HUMBOLDT-- GET OUT OF THE KITCHEN!!! LET READY-MONEY REILLY'S ALL-NEW DAYTIME CAFETERIA FEED YOUR MEN!!! LET READY-MONEY REILLY FEED **YOU, TOO!!!** ENJOY MORE SPARE TIME FOR SOCIALIZING WITH YOUR REILLY'S MAKE READY-MONEY REILLY'S DAYTIME CAFETERIA-- DAILY! DAY GATHERING PLACE-- COOKING PRICES--CHEAP! HOME- COOKING TO EAT IN OR TAKE OUT, A SPECIALTY! COME EARLY AND AVOID THE RUSH! STAY AS LATE AS YOU WANT-- UNTIL THREE O'CLOCK!

ROUTE 743-- JUST PAST BLUEBLOSSOM'S BOG.

YOU MEAN DISHIN' UP DAYTIME VITTLES IS A-GOIN TO GIT BACK YER INVESTMENT? I DUNNO-- MOST FOLKS AROUND HERE JEST OPENS UP THEIR LUNCH-BOXES WHEREVER THEY HAPPENS TO BE!!

AN' WHO **PACKS** THEM LUNCH-BOXES? WHO HAS TO COOK 'EM? WHO WRAPS 'EM UP? THE **WOMEN, THAT'S WHO!** IN **BIG BUSINESS, MERLIN,** WHEN YA SAVE THE **WOMEN** FROM DOIN' EXTRA WORK, YA GOT 'EM EATIN' OUTA YER HAND! THAT THERE'S **PSYCHOLOGY!**

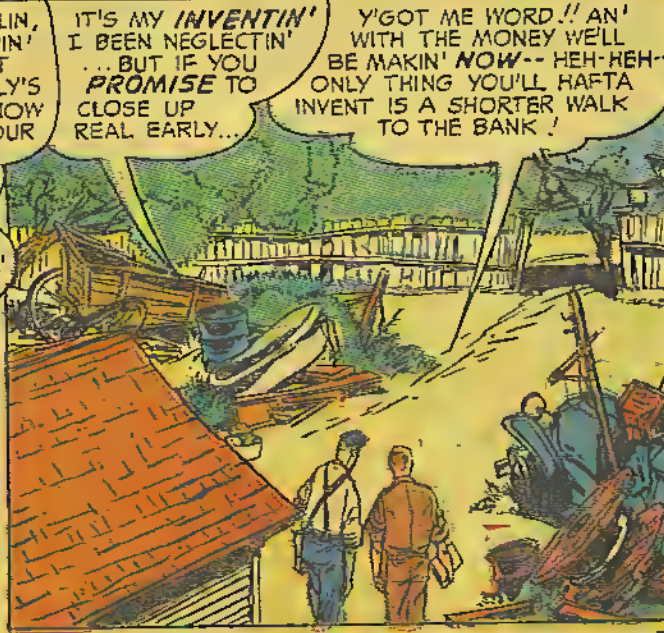


I DON'T RIGHTLY KNOW WHAT IT'S **CALLED**, BUT AUNTIE BLUEBLOSSOM'S THINKIN' RAN KINDA CLOSE TO THEM SAME LINES... AN' SHE WAS MIGHTY **GLAD** TO BE GIVIN' THAT DINER AWAY!

C'MON, MERLIN, WE'RE NEEDIN' YER EXPERT ADVICE! UGLY'S OUT THERE NOW HANGIN' UP OUR NEW SIGN! HELPIN' OUT IN THE **DAYTIME'S** NOT GONNA TIRE YOUT! YOU'LL HAVE PLENTY O'TIME FER CATCHIN' UP ON YER SLEEP!

IT'S MY **INVENTIN'** I BEEN NEGLECTIN'... BUT IF YOU **PROMISE** TO CLOSE UP REAL EARLY...

Y'GOT ME WORD!! AN' WITH THE MONEY WE'LL BE MAKIN' **NOW--** HEH-HEH-- ONLY THING YOU'LL HAFTA INVENT IS A SHORTER WALK TO THE BANK!



SOON, ABOUT A WEEK LATER...

OKAY, MERLIN--GRAB A TRAY AND GO THROUGH AGAIN SO'S UGLY CAN GET SOME MORE PRACTICE!

I BEEN GOIN' THROUGH EVERY DAY, READY-MONEY! THE LI'L FELLER'S RIGHT SLICK WITH LADLIN' OUT... AN' I DON'T THINK I CAN EAT ANY MORE PRUNES!

READY-MONEY'S DAYTIME CAFETERIA-FOOD A SPECIALTY



WOULD YOU RATHER PRACTICE WITH THE RICE PUDDING TODAY, MR. MULLINS? IT'S REAL GOOD, AN', IT'S ONLY BEEN HERE SINCE TUESDAY!

GET THAT TRAY BACK ON THE PILE, MERLIN! SO HELP ME, WE GOT CUSTOMERS!

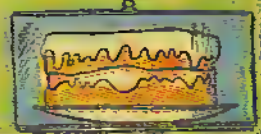


COME RIGHT IN, FOLKS! WELCOME TO READY-MONEY'S DAYTIME CAFE-- OH NO!!!

WHY IT'S THE SAME MAN WUZ HERE BEFORE, PAW... BUT HE DON'T LOOK WELL! NOW, MIND YOU DON'T GO PICKIN' OUT THINGS WHAT DON'T AGREE WITH YA!

AUNTIE BLUE-BLOSSOM'S RICE PUDDIN' WEREN'T NEVER LIKE THAT, SONNY! HERS USED TO FAIR... QUIVER ALL OVER THE DISH! WHAT'S THE MATTER, MAW? GOT SOMETHIN' IN YER EYE?

THAT'S AUNTIE BLUE-BLOSSOM'S OWN CAKE! I WAS PASSIN' THE TIME O'DAY WITH HER WHEN SHE BAKED IT! I'D KNOW IT ANYWHERE! SNIFF--SNIFF---C'MON, PAW...I CAN'T EAT WHEN I GET ALL TEARFUL...



BUT I'M A-COMIN' BACK FER A GOOD CRY OVER THE CAKE! AUNTIE BLUEBLOSSOM WAS THAT SWEET!

DIDJA HEAR WHAT SHE SAID, READY-MONEY? DIDJA?? SHE'S COMIN' BACK! OH, I KNEW MY IDEA WAS---

I DON'T CARE WHAT YER IDEA WAS! I DON'T CARE WHAT NOBODY'S IDEA WAS! I'VE HAD IT, YA HEAR? Y'CAN TAKE THIS @K\$Z'6K...FLEA-BAG AN' DO ANYTHIN' YA WANT WITH IT!! BUT IF I EVER GET THAT FIVE-SPOT DOUGHERTY...IF I EVER...

DO YOU MEAN IT, READY-MONEY? I CAN REALLY HAVE IT? OH, GOSH... THANKS! I'LL GET BUSY FIXIN' IT UP RIGHT AWAY---NOW, LET'S SEE... FIRST THING IS WHAT AM I GOIN' TO CALL IT?



A FEW DAYS LATER...

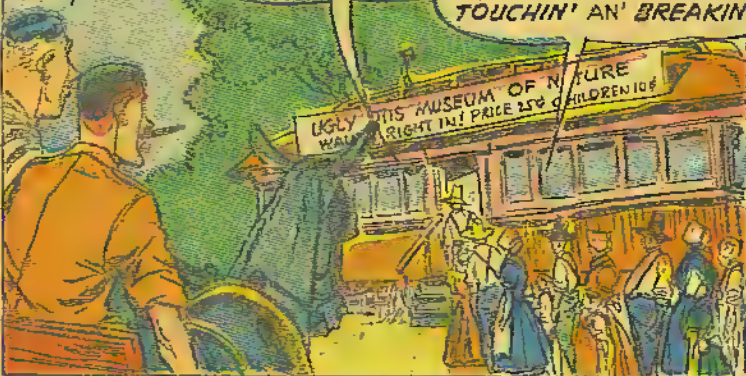
I TOLD YA THE LITTLE FELLER'S GOT A RIGHT SLICK HEAD! COME AS A SURPRISE, DON'T IT?

RIGHT ENTERPRISIN' THING OPENIN' UP THIS HERE MUSEUM, EH, LUD? HUMBOLDT'S CHOCK FULL O' HISTORICAL RELICS! WHY, GRAN'PAPPY WAS TELLIN' ME ONLY T'OTHER DAY THAT WHEN HE WAS A BOY--

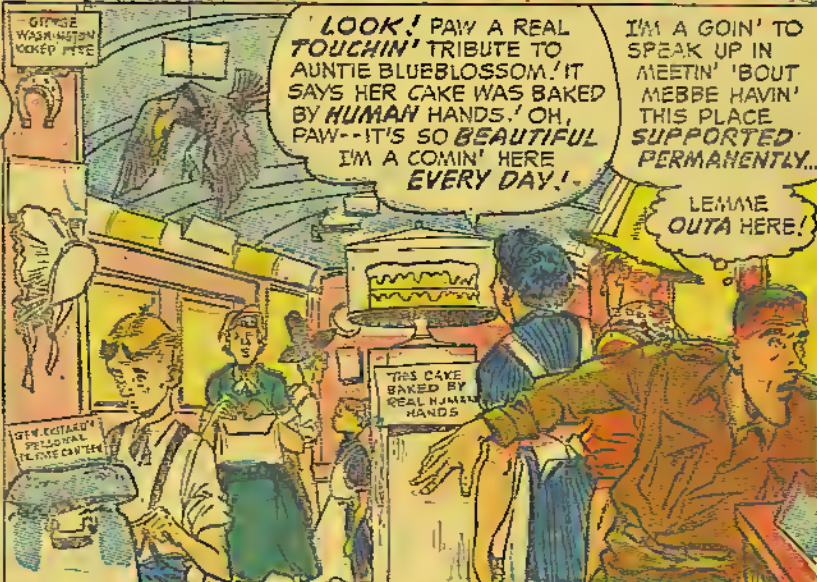
---AN' EFFEN I CATCH YA PUTTIN' ONE FINGER ON ANYTHIN', I'M A-MARCHING YA STRAIGHT HOME! MUSEEYUMS IS FER LOOKIN' AN' LEARNIN'--NOT FER TOUCHIN' AN' BREAKIN'!

OKAY--LEMMIE THROUGH--LEMMIE THROUGH, WILL YA? I GOTTA GET INSIDE...

WHY, THERE'S THAT SAME MAN AGAIN, PAW! IT SURE DON'T LOOK TO ME LIKE HE EATS RIGHT! HE'S A WORSE COLOR GREEN EVERY TIME I SEE 'IM!



THANK YOU, M'AM...THAT'S FORTY-FIVE CENTS... OH, HELLO, READY-MONEY, I'M AWFUL GLAD TO... GEE! IS SOMETHIN' THE MATTER? YOU DON'T HAVE TO PAY!



YOU WENT THROUGH REAL SPEEDY! YOU SURE YOU SEEN EVERYTHIN'?

I SEEN IT! WITH MY OWN BLASTED EYES! GET ME BACK TO CAMP QUICK, MERLIN, WILL YA? I DON'T FEEL SO GOOD...

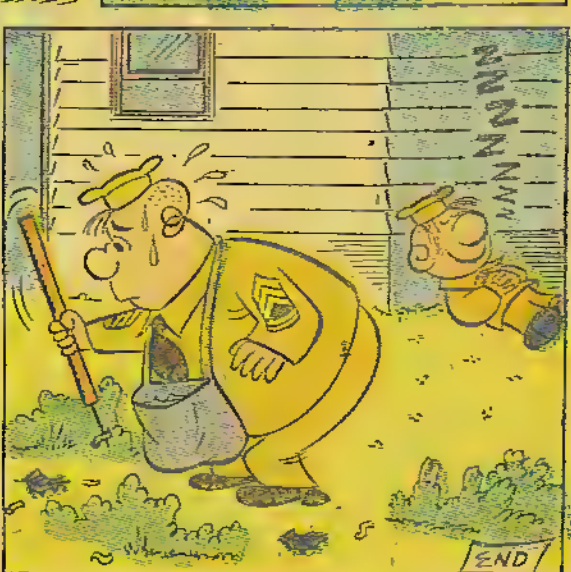
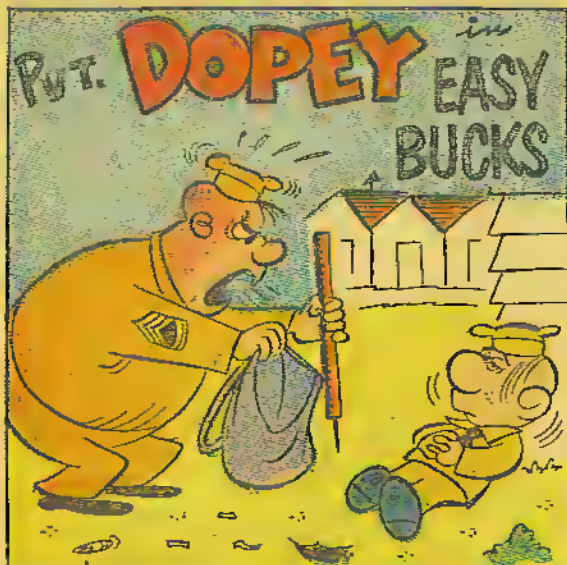


MEANWHILE, SOMEWHERE NOT FAR OUT OF TOWN...

---AND WHEN FIVE-SPOT DOUGHERTY SPOTS A MAN WITH BRAINS, FIVE-SPOT AIN'T NEVER WRONG! NOW, IT JUST SO HAPPENS I GOT HERE...



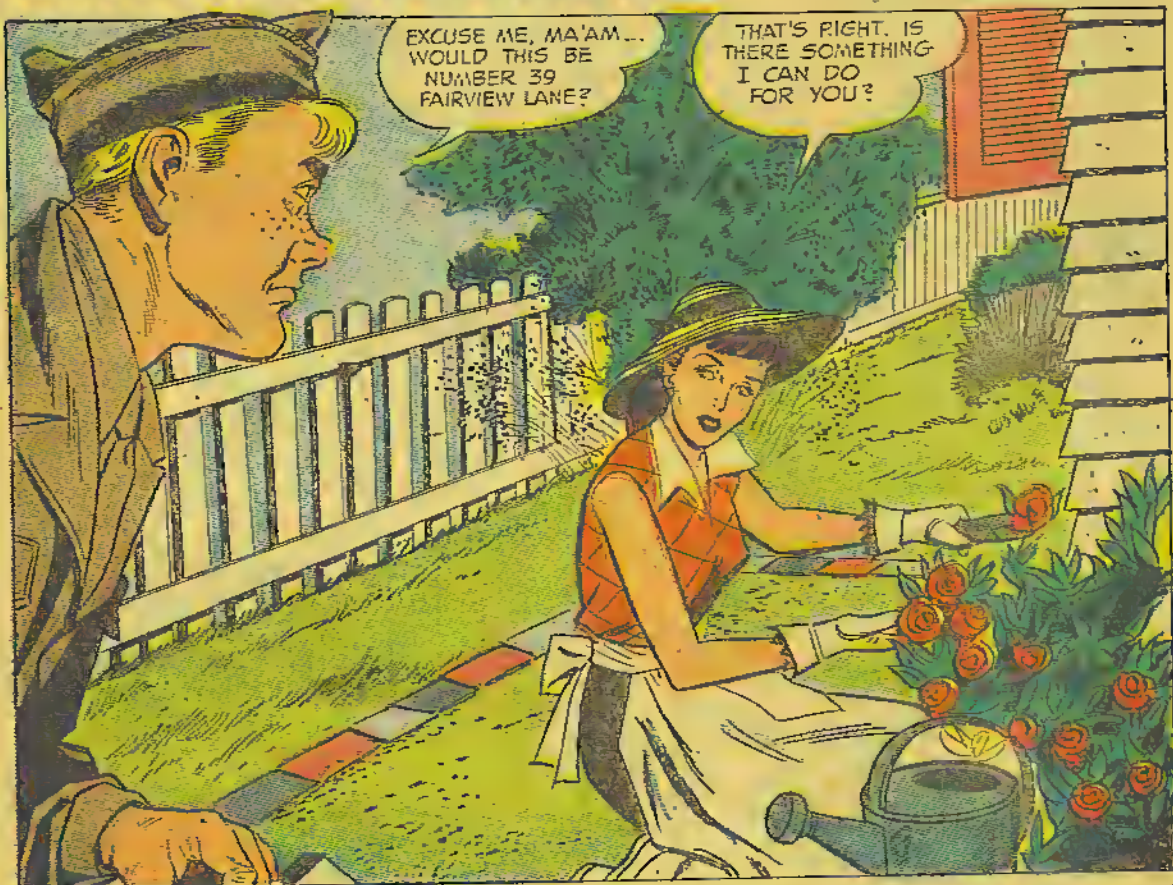
THE END



G.I. Joe

WHERE IS MY HUSBAND?

"WHERE IS MY HUSBAND?" THAT SOUNDS LIKE SUCH A SIMPLE, EVERYDAY QUESTION; DOESN'T IT? FOR THREE YEARS, AS MRS. RICHARD BLAKE, I HAD LIVED IN NO MORE THAN A SHROUD OF MEMORY... AMONG WHAT SEEMED TO BE NO MORE THAN THE GHOSTS OF MY FAMILY AND FRIENDS... UNTIL THE DAY A STRANGE SOLDIER TURNED IN AT MY GATE, AND ASKED ME IF HE HAD THE RIGHT ADDRESS..."



EXCUSE ME, MA'AM... WOULD THIS BE NUMBER 39 FAIRVIEW LANE?

THAT'S RIGHT. IS THERE SOMETHING I CAN DO FOR YOU?



I-I'VE GOT A MESSAGE! IT'S FOR A MRS. RICHARD BLAKE! IT'S - FROM HER HUSBAND!

"I DON'T KNOW HOW I MANAGED TO KEEP MY SENSES! I COULD FEEL NOTHING BUT A FRIGHTENING COLD FROM THE WARMTH OF THE SUN..."

I'M MRS. RICHARD BLAKE...



WHAT IS THE MESSAGE, PLEASE?

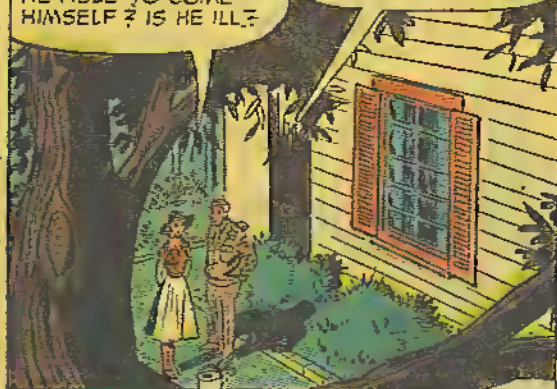
I-I'M JOE BURCH, MA'AM... DICK'S ASKED ME TO TELL YOU - HE'S STATIONED HERE AT CAMP HUMBOLDT NOW - HE ASKED ME TO TELL YOU - IT...IT'S ALL OVER...



"SO IT HAD FINALLY COME! AS QUIETLY—AS DEAFENINGLY SHATTERING AS IF IT HAD BEEN A BOMB! I FORCED MY LIPS TO SHAPE MY NEXT WORDS..."

DICK ASKED YOU TO BRING ME THIS MESSAGE? WASN'T HE ABLE TO COME HIMSELF? IS HE ILL?

NO, MA'AM! HE—WELL, I GUESS HE FIGURED IT WAS BETTER THIS WAY!



"DICK STILL REFUSED TO SEE ME. IT MADE NO SENSE. I FELT AS IF THE RAGGED EDGES OF MY OWN MIND WERE BEGINNING TO SLIP AWAY..."

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

YES—YES! PLEASE COME INSIDE THE HOUSE, WILL YOU? THERE ARE THINGS I'VE GOT TO KNOW! I SHOULDN'T LIKE TO LEARN THEM HERE!

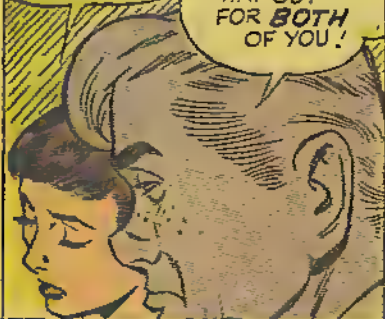


"INSIDE THE HOUSE, I WAS GRATEFUL FOR THE COOL SHADOWS... GRATEFUL FOR THE WAY THE SOLDIER WAITED QUIETLY UNTIL I FINALLY SPOKE..."

"I FELT THE FIRM TOUCH OF HIS HAND ON MY ARM..."

DID HE GIVE YOU ANY REASON WHY HE WANTS TO GIVE UP?

NO—HE JUST SAID THAT THIS IS THE ONLY WAY OUT—FOR BOTH OF YOU!



PLEASE... I DIDN'T WANT TO BRING YOU THIS MESSAGE! I'VE HAD TO DO A LOT OF THINGS I DON'T LIKE—BUT NOTHIN' EVER AS TOUGH AS THIS!



DO YOU KNOW ONE OF THE VERY FIRST THINGS DICK EVER SAID TO ME, PRIVATE? HE SAID I REMINDED HIM OF THE MONTH OF MAY... WHEN EVERYTHING IS SO YOUNG AND SO ALIVE... AND JUST WAKING UP. I WAS SEVENTEEN THEN...



"I KNEW I HAD NO RIGHT TALKING TO THIS SOLDIER AS I WAS. HE HAD NO POSSIBLE REASON FOR WANTING TO KNOW HOW MUCH I LOVED DICK BLAKE..."

"AND IN THE NEXT MOMENTS, I WASN'T IN MY LIVING ROOM WITH A STRANGE YOUNG SOLDIER. I SAW DICK BLAKE, AS I FIRST REMEMBERED HIM..."

AND DO YOU KNOW WHY I FELL IN LOVE WITH DICK? HE WAS SO ALONE—AND WANTED SO DESPERATELY TO LEARN HOW NOT TO BE!



YOU'VE BEEN SITTING HERE AN AWFULLY LONG TIME, SOLDIER! WOULD YOU LIKE TO DANCE?

IF YOU DON'T MIND, I'D LIKE YOU TO TALK TO ME FOR A LITTLE WHILE!



"AND MUCH LATER THAT SAME NIGHT..."

I ALMOST DIDN'T GO TO THAT PARTY TONIGHT, ELAINE— BUT NOW I'M GLAD I DID! YOU'VE BEEN WONDERFUL LETTING ME TALK TO YOU THE WAY I HAVE...

I'VE LIKED LISTENING TO YOU, DICK— BUT I HAVEN'T LIKED SOME OF THE THINGS YOU'VE SAID!



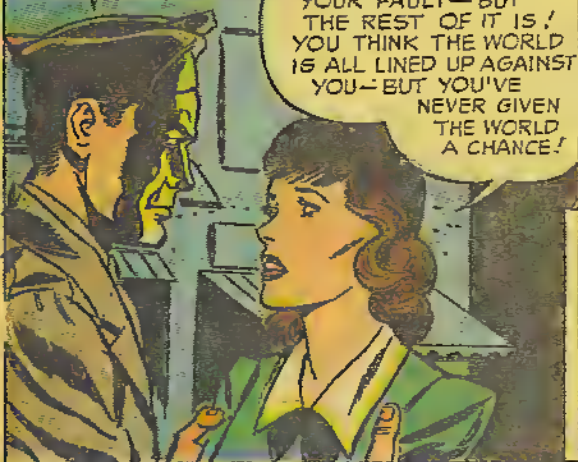
I DIDN'T MEAN TO SAY ANYTHING OUT OF LINE!

YOU DIDN'T! IT'S THAT LITTLE CHIP YOU'RE WEARING,



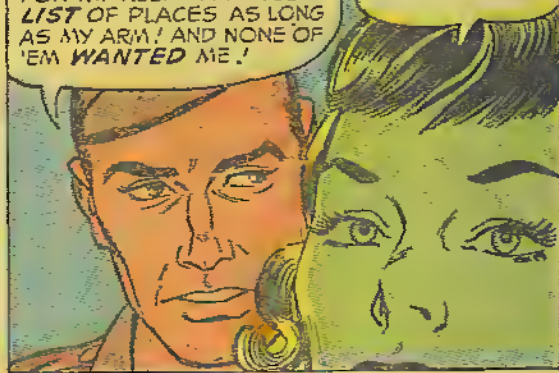
CHIP? WHAT DO YOU MEAN, ELAINE?

YOU'RE ALL ALONE IN THE WORLD... NOT HAVING A FAMILY ISN'T YOUR FAULT— BUT THE REST OF IT IS! YOU THINK THE WORLD IS ALL LINED UP AGAINST YOU— BUT YOU'VE NEVER GIVEN THE WORLD A CHANCE!



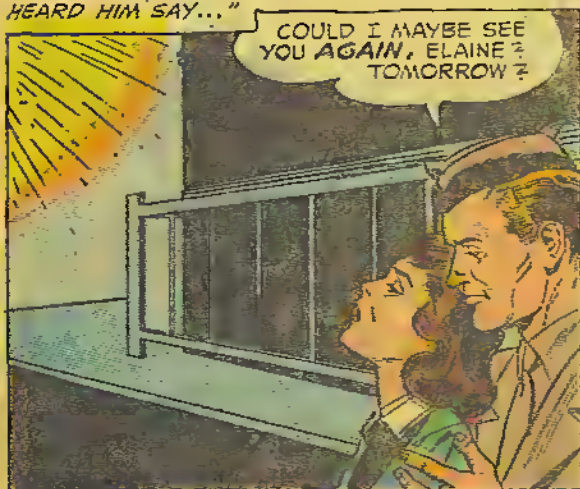
BUT YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE BEING ALONE! I DON'T EVEN REMEMBER MY FATHER AND MOTHER! ALL I REMEMBER IS BEING FARMED OUT TO WORK FOR MY KEEP— A WHOLE LIST OF PLACES AS LONG AS MY ARM! AND NONE OF 'EM WANTED ME!

DID THEY TELL YOU THAT? DID EVEN ONE OF THEM SAY, "RICHARD BLAKE— I DON'T CARE WHAT HAPPENS TO YOU!"?

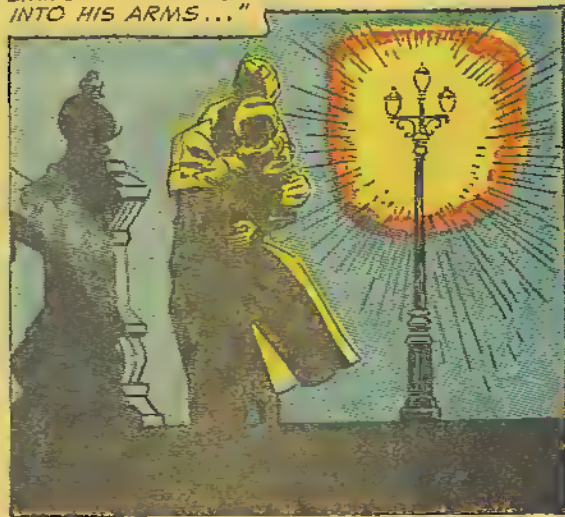


"I DON'T KNOW WHAT MADE ME TALK THIS WAY, UNLESS IT WAS THE SUDDEN FEELING THAT I'D KNOWN THIS BOY ALL MY LIFE... THAT HIS PROBLEMS WERE MINE. THEN VERY QUIETLY, I HEARD HIM SAY..."

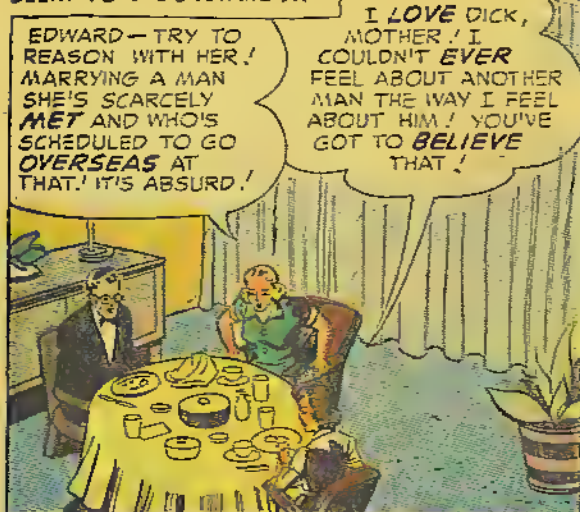
COULD I MAYBE SEE YOU AGAIN, ELAINE? TOMORROW?



"AND GONE WAS THE BITTER— EVEN ARROGANT— LONELY BOY! A MAN STOOD IN HIS PLACE! I SMILED UP AT HIM, AND HE TOOK ME GENTLY INTO HIS ARMS..."



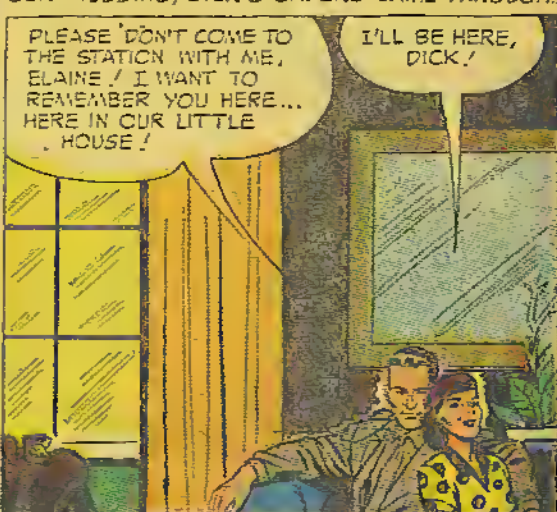
"BEFORE THE NEXT WEEK WAS OUT, I HAD MADE A DECISION, ONE THAT MOM AND DAD DIDN'T SEEM TO UNDERSTAND..."



EDWARD—TRY TO REASON WITH HER! MARRYING A MAN SHE'S SCARCELY MET AND WHO'S SCHEDULED TO GO OVERSEAS AT THAT! IT'S ABSURD!

I LOVE DICK, MOTHER! I COULDN'T EVER FEEL ABOUT ANOTHER MAN THE WAY I FEEL ABOUT HIM! YOU'VE GOT TO BELIEVE THAT!

"WE WERE MARRIED, DESPITE MY PARENTS' DISAPPROVAL AND THEN, THE VERY DAY AFTER OUR WEDDING, DICK'S ORDERS CAME THROUGH..."



PLEASE DON'T COME TO THE STATION WITH ME, ELAINE! I WANT TO REMEMBER YOU HERE... HERE IN OUR LITTLE HOUSE!

I'LL BE HERE, DICK!

"AND WITH THE SWEET MEMORY OF HIS KISS ON MY LIPS, I WATCHED MY HUSBAND GO OUT THROUGH OUR FRONT GATE. I WATCHED HIM FOR AS LONG AS I COULD SEE HIM... HE NEVER LOOKED BACK..."



...NOR HAVE I EVER HAD WORD FROM HIM SINCE! NOT FOR THREE YEARS! NOT EVEN A LETTER! NOTHING BUT HIS ALLOTMENT CHECKS, AND I HAVEN'T TOUCHED A PENNY OF THOSE! THEY'RE ALL IN THE BANK!



I LOVED DICK THEN, AND I LOVE HIM NOW!



WILL YOU TELL HIM I'LL DO ANYTHING—ANYTHING—IF HE'LL ONLY COME BACK TO ME? I LOVE HIM—NO MATTER HOW HE FEELS ABOUT ME, BEG MY HUSBAND TO COME HOME! PLEASE!

"I WALKED AWAY FROM THAT BUNGALOW FEELING ALL KIND OF SICK AND EMPTY INSIDE. I'D JUST SEEN A WOMAN HUMBLE HERSELF LIKE I'D NEVER KNOWN ANYBODY COULD DO!"



"MY FOOTSTEPS ECHOED IN THE QUIET TREE-LINED STREET... ONLY, ALL OF A SUDDEN, THE TREES WEREN'T GREEN AND FULL AND SWEET-SMELLING."

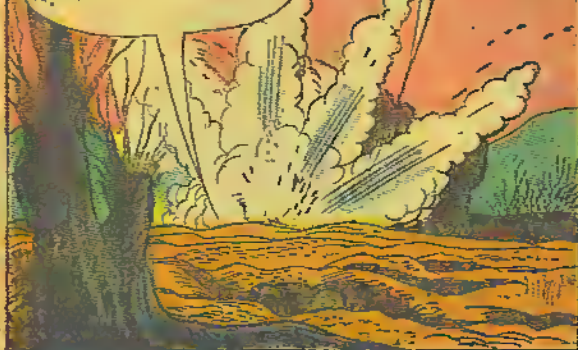
JUST BEFORE I GOT SHIPPED OVER HERE I MET THIS GIRL, SEE, AND-- I GUESS I SHOULDN'T BE BOTHERIN' YOU WITH THIS, BUT YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO'S BEEN A FRIEND TO ME!

I WOULDN'T SAY THAT, DICK! ALL THE FELLERS HAVE **TRIED** TO BE FRIENDLY-- BUT YOU KEPT PUSHIN' 'EM AWAY!



WELL, SHE WAS SORT OF **ALONE**-- AND SO WAS I. THAT'S WHAT BROUGHT US TOGETHER... BUT NOW THAT I'VE BEEN OUT HERE SO LONG, I KNOW YOU'VE GOT TO HAVE MORE THAN THAT TO HANG A MARRIAGE ON! WE WERE JUST **KIDS** GRABBING AT A MIXED-UP DREAM!

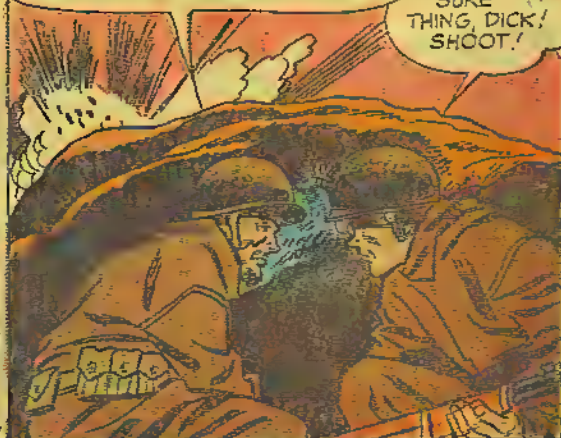
MAYBE AFTER YOU GET HOME--



"...THEY WERE TWISTED AND BARREN AND DEAD... AND I WAS BACK ON A NAKED MOUNTAIN-SIDE IN KOREA-- DUG IN WITH DICK BLAKE!"

JOE-- MIND IF I TELL YOU SOMETHIN' ? I-I'VE GOT TO TELL **SOMEBODY**!

SURE THING, DICK! SHOOT!



IT'S THIS THING THAT'S ON MY MIND, / LIVING WITH THIS MISTAKE I MADE ISN'T EASY! THIS GIRL I MENTIONED-- I MARRIED HER, JOE! THE DAY BEFORE I SHIPPED OUT! THE WHOLE THING WAS **WRONG**! I KNOW THAT NOW!

HOW DO YOU KNOW IT'S WRONG?



MAYBE I **WON'T** GET HOME! IF THAT HAPPENS JOE-- AND THINGS GO OKAY FOR YOU-- WOULD YOU TELL ELAINE I **KNEW** HOW CRAZY WE WERE ? WOULD YOU TELL HER ? IT WON'T BE TOO LATE FOR HER TO FIND SOMEBODY ELSE!

SURE, DICK-- BUT YOU'LL MAKE IT ALL RIGHT! AN' MAYBE WHEN YOU **DO** GET HOME, YOU'LL CHANGE YOUR MIND!



"AND THEN IT WAS LIKE DICK WAS PLEADING WITH ME TO TRY AND UNDERSTAND..."

I THOUGHT I HAD TO HAVE SOMEBODY WAITING FOR ME, JOE. ELAINE JUST HAPPENED ALONG... AND THE TWO OF US GOT CAUGHT UP IN ALL THE RAH-RAH STUFF OF LEAVIN' FOR OVERSEAS!



IT'S BETTER IF I JUST LET HER FORGET ME. ONLY THING I WANT TO FEEL SURE ABOUT IS SOMEBODY TELLING HER HOW IT WAS... IF I DON'T GET BACK THERE TO TELL HER MYSELF!



"AND THEN, ALMOST AS IF SOME BIG INVISIBLE HAND HAD WIPE D ALL THE NOISE AWAY, I WAS BACK IN THAT DROWSY LITTLE TOWN AGAIN. EVERYTHING WAS GONE EXCEPT THE MEMORY OF DICK BLAKE'S WORDS..."



BUT I'VE GROWN UP SINCE BEIN' OUT HERE! I'M NOT A KID ANY MORE, AND THAT'S WHAT ELAINE AND I WERE! SHE'S PROBABLY FOUND IT OUT BY NOW, TOO!

WHY DON'T YOU WRITE TO HER AN' SEE IF SHE FEELS THE SAME?



AND, JOE, THANKS FOR LETTIN' ME TELL YOU ABOUT IT! I SURE FEEL A LOT BETTER!



"AS I REACHED THE BUS STATION AND HEARD THE BIG ENGINE STARTING UP, I KNEW WHAT I WAS GOING TO DO!"



"BACK AT CAMP, IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG TO LOCATE DICK BLAKE..."

I SAW HER, DICK— AND I'VE GOT NEWS FOR YOU! I GAVE HER YOUR MESSAGE—AND YOU KNOW WHAT SHE DID?



SHE STARTED TO LAUGH! SHE SAID, "TELL DICK I'M THE ONE WHO'S FINISHED!"

ELAINE SAID THAT?



AND A LOT MORE! SHE'S ALL WASHED UP WITH YOU, BLAKE! SHE DOESN'T WANT ANY PART OF YOU! IF SHE NEVER LAYS EYES ON YOU AGAIN, IT'LL BE TOO SOON!



SHE SAID IF YOU THINK YOU CAN COME BACK AFTER THREE YEARS AND TELL HER---

SHUT UP, JOE! PLEASE-- WILL YOU SHUT UP?



"IT WASN'T MUCH MORE THAN A WHISPER... AND FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE I'D EVER KNOWN HIM, IT LOOKED LIKE DICK BLAKE WAS GOIN' TO CRY. I HELD MY GROUND... WAITING. FINALLY..."

I'M GOING TO HER, JOE! WHETHER SHE LIKES IT OR NOT— I'M GOING TO HER!



"IT WAS A LONG SHOT... BUT I KNEW NOW IT HAD PAID OFF!"

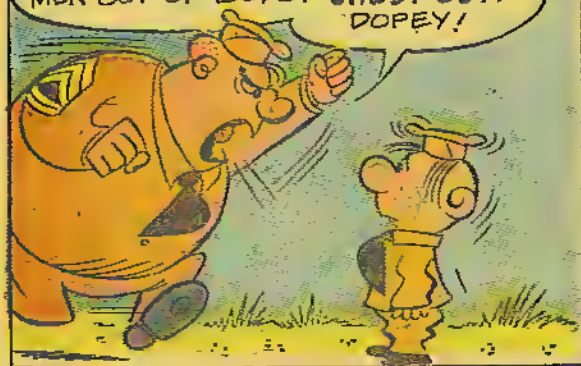


"... ELAINE BLAKE'S HUSBAND WOULD BE COMING BACK TO CAMP! I FELT REAL GOOD ABOUT IT! I DECIDED TO GO FIND MULVANEY--AND STAND HIM TO A BEER!"

The End

Pvt. DOPEY in "POP OFF"

TODAY'S INSPECTION! I WANT THE COLONEL TO KNOW I MAKE MEN OUT OF BOYS! CHEST OUT, DOPEY!



WATCH THIS, RUNT!

POP!
POP!
POP!



SGT. ME TUFF!



IS THAT THE EXAMPLE YOU SET FOR YOUR MEN? JUST LOOK AT PVT. DOPEY — NEAT AS A PIN! IT'S K.P. FOR YOU, SERGEANT!



Vic
MARTIN



END

G.I. Joe

THE MILK BOTTLE SOLDIERS

FOR A LONG TIME NOW, SERGEANT MULVANEY HAD FIGURED HIS DAYS FOR HANDLING THE "RAW RECRUIT" WERE OVER. HE HAD A LONG AND IMPRESSIVE RECORD FOR TURNING THE CLUMSY, BUMBLING "ROOKIE" INTO THE SKILLFUL FIGHTING MACHINE THAT IS THE SOLDIER, BUT AS IN EVERY ORGANIZATION OF COMPARABLE SIZE AND STRENGTH, THE ARMY HAS ITS EMERGENCIES, TOO—A POINT WHICH, AS OUR STORY OPENS, THE COMMANDING OFFICER AT CAMP HUMBOLDT IS MAKING VERY CLEAR...

...AND DUE TO THIS PRESSURE OF OTHER ASSIGNMENTS ON OUR PERSONNEL, I'M ASKING **YOU** TO TAKE OVER THE TRAINING OF THESE NEW ARRIVALS, SERGEANT! IT MEANS STARTING FROM SCRATCH, BUT I'M CONFIDENT THESE MEN WILL BE IN CAPABLE HANDS!

I APPRECIATE YER THINKIN' OF **ME**, COLONEL—BUT HANDLIN' ROOKIES IS A BIG RESPONSIBILITY! I DON'T THINK I'M QUALIFIED TO--

IT'S **BECAUSE** OF YOUR QUALIFICATIONS THAT I'M ASKING YOU TO UNDERTAKE THIS RESPONSIBILITY, SERGEANT—AND IT **IS** A BIG ONE! MY RESPONSIBILITY IS TO SEE TO IT THAT THESE MEN BECOME **SOLDIERS**—IN EXACTLY THIRTEEN WEEKS! IN EFFECT THEN, I'M ASKING **YOU** TO MAKE MY RESPONSIBILITY **YOURS**! WILL YOU DO IT? OF COURSE, I **COULD** MAKE IT AN ORDER, BUT--

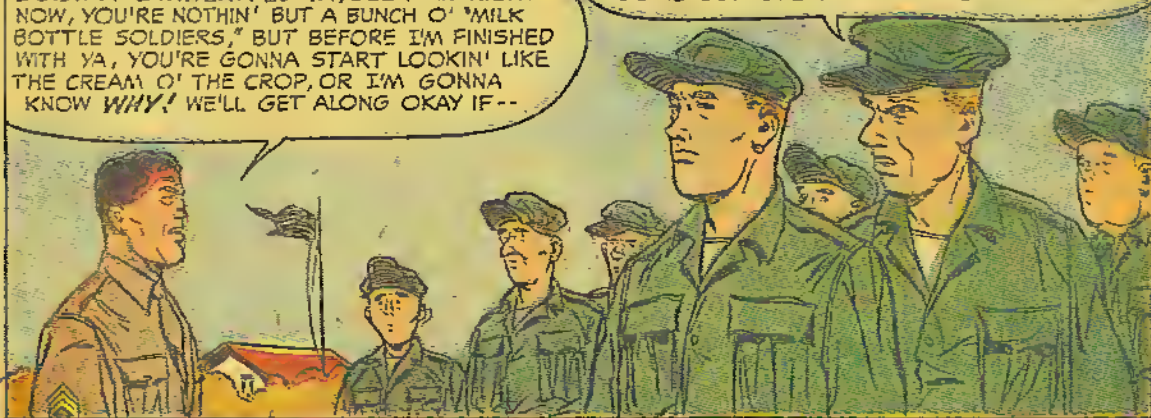
Y'WON'T HAVE TO DO THAT, SIR! COUNT ON ME FER DOIN' THE BEST I **CAN** FER YA! I JUST WANTED YA TO KNOW IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE I HANDLED ANY BASICS AN' --

IF YOU'RE TRYING TO TELL ME THAT A **MULVANEY** EVER LOSES HIS TOUCH FOR ACHIEVING RESULTS—WE'RE WASTING TIME! THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION, SERGEANT --AND **GOOD LUCK!**

A FEW DAYS LATER...

... SO DON'T GO GETTIN' ANY FANCY IDEAS ABOUT ME ASKIN' FER YA! I DIDN'T! I **INHERITED** YA, SEE? AN' RIGHT NOW, YOU'RE NOTHIN' BUT A BUNCH O' 'MILK BOTTLE SOLDIERS,' BUT BEFORE I'M FINISHED WITH YA, YOU'RE GONNA START LOOKIN' LIKE THE CREAM O' THE CROP, OR I'M GONNA KNOW **WHY!** WE'LL GET ALONG OKAY IF--

—HEY! STOP CROWDIN' ME! IT'S SAD ENOUGH BEIN' IN THE ARMY WITHOUT SOME GUY STEPPIN' ALL OVER YOUR FEET!

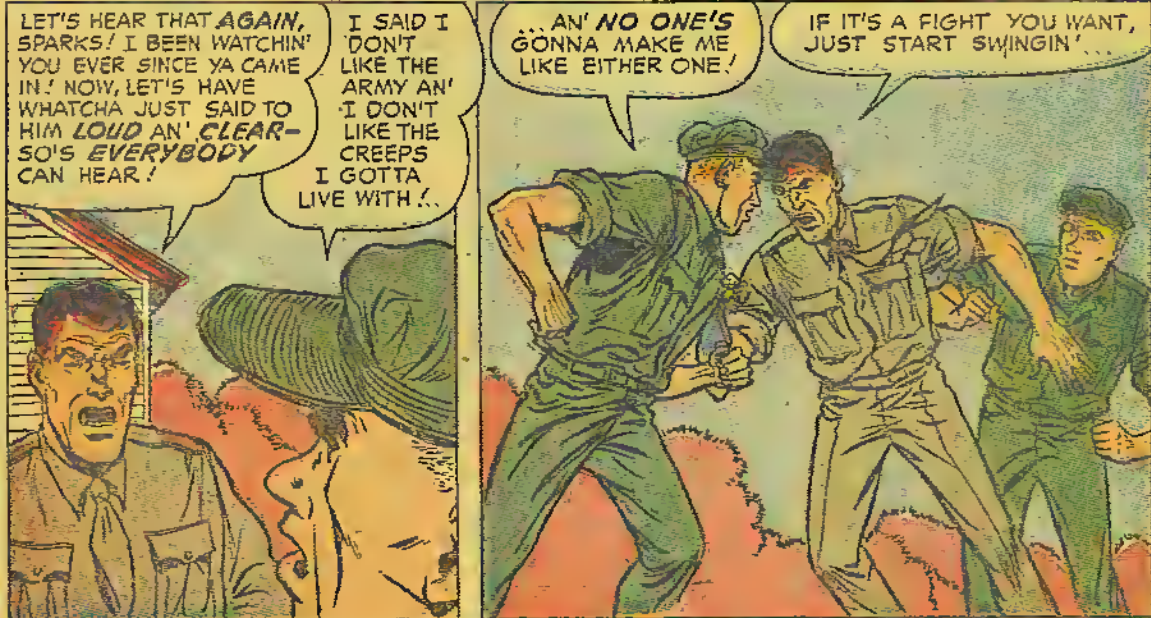


LET'S HEAR THAT **AGAIN**, SPARKS! I BEEN WATCHIN' YOU EVER SINCE YA CAME IN! NOW, LET'S HAVE WHATCHA JUST SAID TO HIM **LOUD** AN' **CLEAR**—SO'S **EVERYBODY** CAN HEAR!

I SAID I 'DONT LIKE THE ARMY AN' I DONT LIKE THE CREEPS I GOTTA LIVE WITH!...

... AN' **NO ONE'S** GONNA MAKE ME LIKE EITHER ONE!

IF IT'S A FIGHT YOU WANT, JUST START SWINGIN'...

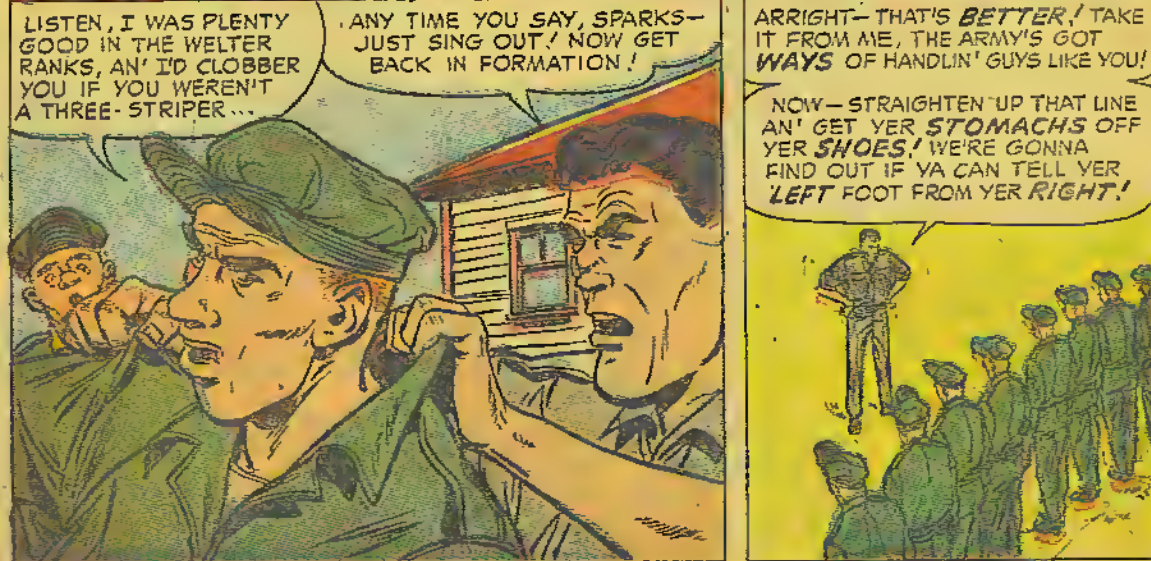


LISTEN, I WAS PLENTY GOOD IN THE WELTER RANKS, AN' I'D CLOBBER YOU IF YOU WEREN'T A THREE-STRIPER...

ANY TIME YOU SAY, SPARKS—JUST SING OUT! NOW GET BACK IN FORMATION!

ARRRIGHT—THAT'S **BETTER!** TAKE IT FROM ME, THE ARMY'S GOT **WAYS** OF HANDLIN' GUYS LIKE YOU!

NOW—STRAIGHTEN UP THAT LINE AN' GET YER **STOMACHS** OFF YER **SHOES!** WE'RE GONNA FIND OUT IF YA CAN TELL YER **'LEFT** FOOT FROM YER **'RIGHT!**



AT THE OBSTACLE COURSE, THE FOLLOWING DAY...

GET THE LEAD OUT, YOU GUYS! THERE AIN'T A SELF-RESPECTIN' **MONKEY** WOULD ADMIT TO **KNOWIN'** YA! THIS AIN'T HOP-SCOTCH! I WANT **ACTION!**

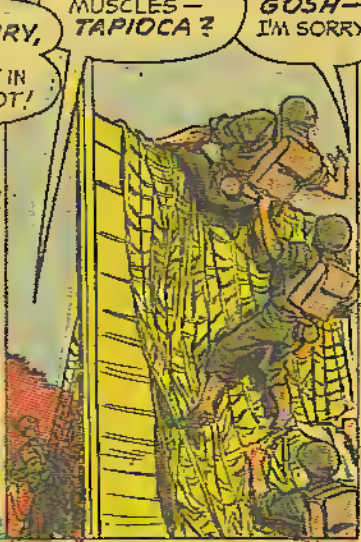
GEE, I'M **SORRY**, HENSHAW! YOU JUST **HAPPENED** TO GET IN THE WAY OF MY FOOT!

I SEEN **GREASED PIGS** DO BETTER ON **FLAGPOLES!** WHAT YOU "MILK BOTTLES" BEEN USIN' FER **MUSCLES — TAPIOCA?**

YOU SURE, KEEP GETTIN' IN MY **WAY**, COLLINS! **GOSH — I'M SORRY!**

YA **BETTER** LEARN TO KEEP DOWN! NEXT WEEK YOU'LL BE DOIN' THIS UNDER **LIVE AMMO — AN!** THAT AIN'T **FUSSY** 'BOUT WHERE IT HITS!

KEEP YER **HEAD UP**, JACKSON — BARBED WIRE'S REAL **HEALTHY** FOR YER **SCALP!**



MAYBE YOU CAN PUSH THE **OTHER** GUYS AROUND, **SPARKS** — BUT YOU AIN'T GONNA **BULLDOZE ME!!**

JACKSON!! SPARKS!!!



OKAY, YOU TWO -- YOU **ASKED** FER IT!



I **TOLD** YA WE GOT WAYS OF HANDLIN' PUNKS! MEBBE YOU FIGGERED I WAS **JOKIN'** — HUH?



SO, OKAY -- START **LAUGHIN'**! Y'AIN'T COMIN' OUTA THERE 'TILL YA **DO!!!**



A FEW DAYS LATER, AT THE RIFLE RANGE...

...AN' THE RIFLE BOLT IS TO BE KEPT OPEN AT ALL TIMES, UNTIL THE ORDER IS GIVEN FOR FIRIN'! AT ALL TIMES—IS THAT CLEAR?

YOU LISTENIN' TO ME, SPARKS?

I HEAR YA!

THAT SERGEANT THINKS HE'S REAL TOUGH! PROBL'Y AIN'T WORTH MUCH WITH GLOVES ON...

WHAT'D I SAY, THEN? C'MON—LET'S HAVE IT! WORD FER WORD—WHAT'D I JUST SAY?

AW, SOMETHIN' ABOUT KEEPIN' THE RIFLE BOLT OPEN...



SO IS THIS BOLT OPEN?

NO—IT'S CLOSED!

SO THERE'S NO WAY OF TELLIN' IF THIS RIFLE'S LOADED OR NOT—IS THERE?

SARGE—WHAT'RE YA DOIN'? DON'T POINT THAT THING AT ME! IT'S LOADED! SURE, IT'S LOADED!!! PUT IT DOWN!!!

JUST LIKE I THOUGHT! FROM HERE ON, YOU MAKE IT YOUR BUSINESS TO KEEP THAT BOLT OPEN UNTIL FIRIN'! THESE AIN'T BLASTED CAP PISTOLS YOU'RE PLAYIN' WITH! THEY'RE --

SURE—SURE THING, SARGE! I'LL BE REAL

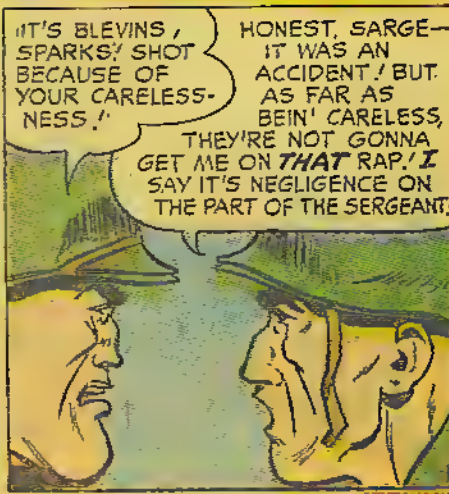
...HUH ???



HOLD IT! HOLD THE FIRE ORDER! A MAN'S BEEN SHOT!

IT'S BLEVINS, SPARKS! SHOT BECAUSE OF YOUR CARELESSNESS!

HONEST, SARGE—IT WAS AN ACCIDENT! BUT AS FAR AS BEIN' CARELESS, THEY'RE NOT GONNA GET ME ON THAT RAP! I SAY IT'S NEGLIGENCE ON THE PART OF THE SERGEANT!



LATE THAT NIGHT...

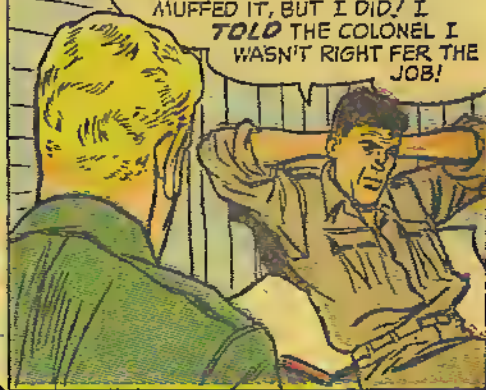
BUT EVERYBODY **KNOWS** THAT SPARKS IS A BAD ACTOR, SARGE! AN' THEY ALL HEARD YOU WARN HIM ABOUT THE RIFLE!

IT WAS AN ACCIDENT, JOE! THERE'S NO DOUBT ABOUT THAT! BUT I'M RESPONSIBLE, EVEN THOUGH SPARKS WAS CARELESS!



WHAT ABOUT SPARKS? WHAT'S HE GOT TO SAY?

SPARKS HAS JUST **ONE** THING TO SAY—AN' HE'S **RIGHT!** HE SAYS **NON-COMS** OUGHTA BE **CAREFUL**—AN' I WASN'T! I LOST MY TEMPER, BURCH—AN' THAT'S NO GOOD WITH TRAINEES! I DIDN'T GET THE SAFETY ANGLE **ACROSS** TO 'EM! I DON'T KNOW **HOW** I MUFFED IT, BUT I DID! I **TOLD** THE COLONEL I WASN'T RIGHT FER THE **JOB!**



MEANWHILE, AT HQ...

... AND WE MUST MAKE EVERY CONCEIVABLE EFFORT, COLONEL, TO KEEP THIS UNFORTUNATE ACCIDENT QUIET UNTIL WE KNOW ALL THE DETAILS! DO YOU HAVE ANY FURTHER WORD AS TO THE BOY'S CONDITION?

NO, SIR. THE MEDICS WON'T SAY ANYTHING MORE THAN 'CRITICAL'—BUT TO BE PERFECTLY FRANK, I DIDN'T LIKE THE **WAY** THEY SAID EVEN THAT!



EXCUSE ME, SIR—SERGEANT MULVANEY IS OUTSIDE! HE REQUESTS PERMISSION TO SEE YOU AND THE GENERAL IMMEDIATELY! HE SAYS IT'S URGENT!

TELL HIM TO COME IN, SERGEANT.



AND NOT MUCH LATER...

YOU **REALIZE**, SERGEANT, THAT—DEPENDING ON CIRCUMSTANCES—YOUR STATEMENTS MAY NOW REQUIRE PREFERMENT OF CHARGES?

I DO SIR... AN' I'M PREPARED TO TAKE WHAT-EVER'S COMIN' TO ME! IT WAS CARELESSNESS ON MY PART—AN' **NOTHIN' ELSE!** PRIVATE SPARKS IS IN **NO WAY TO BLAME!**



A FEW DAYS LATER, WITH PRIVATE BLEVINS STILL HOVERING BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH...

...AND I DO REALIZE THE POSITION YOU'RE IN, COLONEL—BUT AS A REPORTER, I'VE GOT RESPONSIBILITIES, TOO! THE PUBLIC HAS A RIGHT TO **KNOW** WHETHER CAMP HUMBOLDT'S A SAFE PLACE FOR RECRUITS OR **NOT!** AND THAT'S WHAT I'VE BEEN ORDERED TO **FIND OUT!** NOW—SUPPOSE WE START WITH THE **FACTS** OF THE CASE... **EXACTLY** AS THEY HAPPENED!...



AND THE NEXT MORNING, ACROSS THE FRONT PAGES OF THE NATION...



LATER, THE SAME MORNING...

THE FAT'S IN THE FIRE NOW, COLONEL! I'VE BEEN ON THE PHONE WITH THE PENTAGON NEARLY ALL MORNING... THERE'S A COMMITTEE BEING FORMED TO COME DOWN HERE AND --

WHAT'S THE LATEST REPORT ON PRIVATE BLEVINS' CONDITION?

THE SAME, SIR. HE'S HOLDING HIS OWN... SO FAR, THAT'S ALL THEY'LL SAY.



MEANWHILE...

GET YOUR MORNIN' PAPER, SPARKS! READ UP ON WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A **SOLDIER**! READ ALL ABOUT THE **SERGEANT** WHO'S WILLIN' TO TAKE THE RAP FOR A STUPID, CARELESS RECRUIT!



'YOU BRAG ABOUT BEIN' TOUGH! WELL, ANYONE CAN PUT ON A PAIR OF GLOVES IN THE RING! BUT TRY DOIN' WHAT THE SARGE IS GOIN' THROUGH! NO -- YOU'LL NEVER MAKE A SOLDIER, CAUSE YOU HAVEN'T GOT WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A **HUMAN BEING**!



BACK AT HQ...

...AND I'LL EXPECT YOU TO HAVE A DETAILED REPORT READY FOR THE COMMITTEE, COLONEL -- A **FULL** TRANSCRIPT OF SERGEANT MULVANEY'S STATEMENTS TO BE INCLUDED! THE FIRST HEARING IS SCHEDULED FOR --

EXCUSE ME, SIR! I GOTTA SEE YA ABOUT THE BLEVINS SHOOTING!



MINUTES LATER...

...IT WAS AN ACCIDENT, HONEST! I DON'T EVEN **KNOW** BLEVINS! BUT I FIGURED I'D LET THE SARGE TAKE THE RAP! BUT IT'S MY FAULT -- I JUST DIDN'T LISTEN TO HIS INSTRUCTIONS....



LATER, THE SAME DAY...

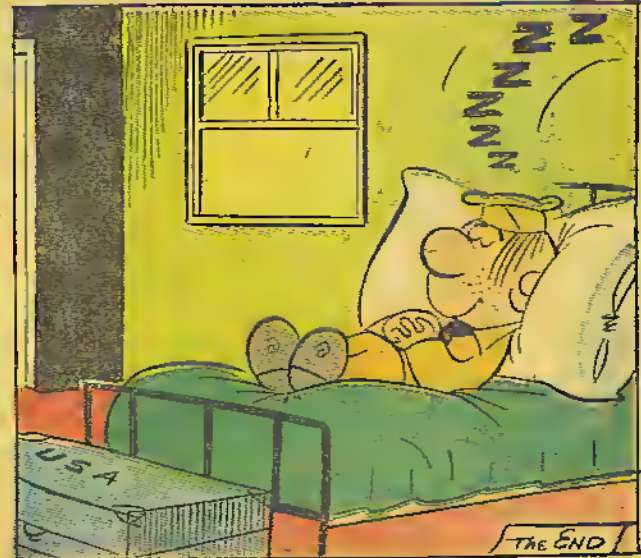
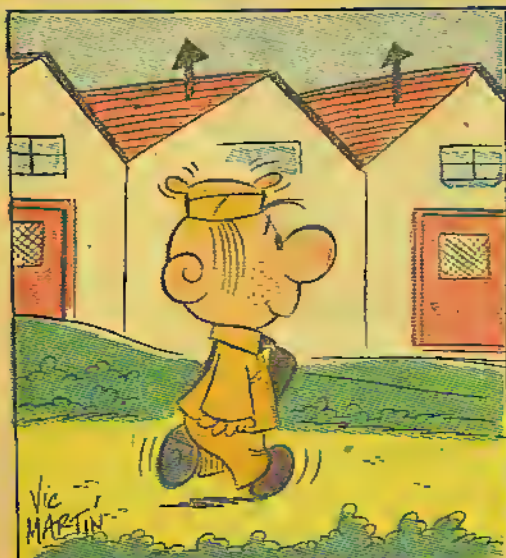
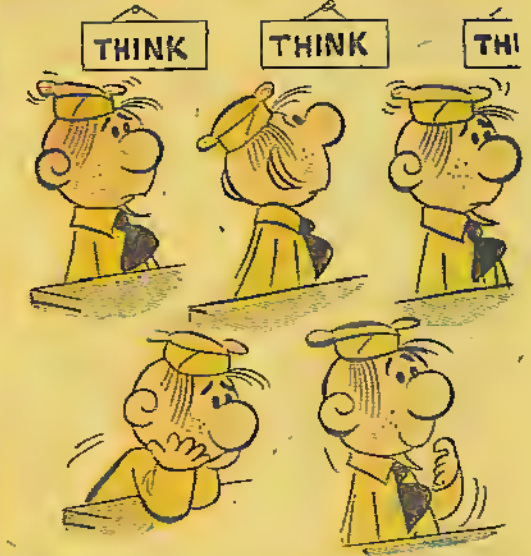
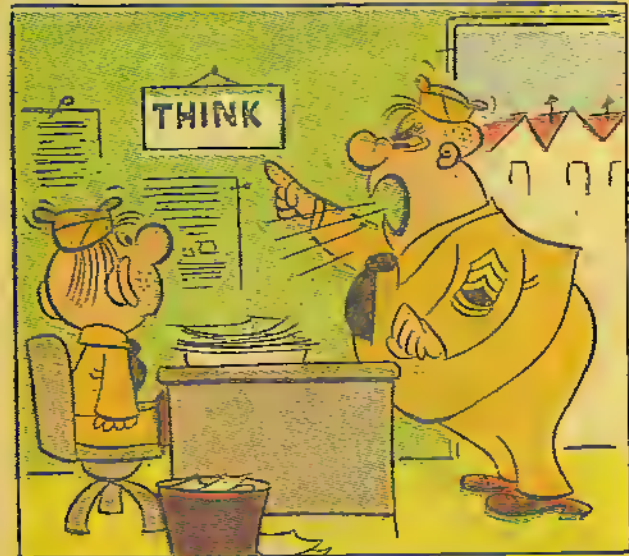
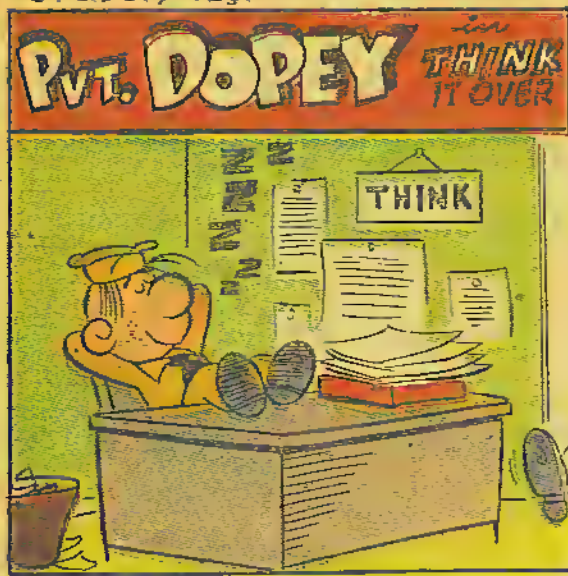
HEY, **SARGE** -- I'VE BEEN LOOKIN' ALL OVER FOR YOU! MIGHT'VE **KNOWN** YOU'D BE HERE! DID YOU HEAR ABOUT SPARKS? HE TOLD 'EM OVER AT HQ THAT IT WAS **ALL** HIS FAULT! HE'S CLEARED YOU ALL THE WAY! IS **THAT** NEWS OR NOT?

YEAH, BURCH, IT'S NEWS -- BUT THE **BEST** NEWS IS WHAT I JUST GOT INSIDE! BLEVINS IS GONNA MAKE IT! THEY'VE JUST CLEARED **HIM** ALL THE WAY!

GEE, IT MUST'VE COST SPARKS **PLENTY** TO ADMIT WHAT HE DID, HUH, SARGE? I DIDN'T THINK HE HAD WHAT IT TAKES!

THERE'S A BIG DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CLIMB-IN' INTO A UNIFORM, BURCH, AN' GETTIN' TO BE A **SOLDIER** -- AN' SPARKS JUST TOOK HIS FIRST BIG STEP AHEAD! MAYBE HE'LL MAKE IT AN' MAYBE HE WON'T! AN' IF HE DOESN'T, ONE THING IS CERTAIN -- THE ARMY WON'T BE TO BLAME, BUT BETWEEN YOU AN' ME -- I THINK HE WILL MAKE IT!





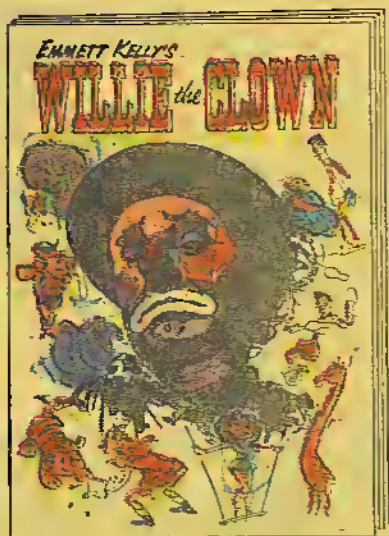


HEY, BUDDY! MEET MY
SIDE-KICK, WILLIE! HE WEARS
A CRAZY SET OF FATIGUES...
BUT HE'S GOT DIFFERENT
DUTY TO PULL!

WILLIE *the* CLOWN

INSPIRED BY EMMETT KELLY,
THE MOST FAMOUS CIRCUS
CLOWN OF OUR TIME!

Yes, *WILLIE THE CLOWN* is a
side-kick of *G.I. JOE's*! It's a
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by Ziff-Davis, *G.I. JOE's*
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that it will be wholesome fun
for the whole family!



YOU'LL GET A KICK OUT OF
WILLIE THE CLOWN!
LOOK FOR IT ON NEWSSTANDS SOON!